1: Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1955 OC6 Iban OC6

operation calls for considerable dexterity and concentration, for the seed has to be made to enter a hole of not more than about one and a half inches in diameter. Each hole is sighted, and then the seed directed towards it with a little flick of the hand (Plate 11). From one handful of seed a woman sows about seven or eight holes. (A count of 50 instances gave a range of from three to fifteen, and a general mean of 7·5 holes sown per handful of seed). Women vary a good deal in skill. A novice finds it necessary to place her hand within a few inches of the ground, and even then she may not succeed in getting all of the seed to enter the hole for which she is aiming; she also has difficulty in controlling the number of grains ejected, and commonly has an average of five or six more seeds per hole, than does an accomplished sower. In contrast, an expert sower deftly flicks the seed from a distance of about 18 inches, maintains an extremely steady rate (i.e. number of grains per hole), and seldom has seeds fall outside the dibble-hole. The pace of sowing varies from about 40 to 65 holes per minute, according to skill and the state of the farm; after a bad burn, for example, the surface is littered with logs, and this slows up both dibbling and sowing.

Figure 4. An Iban *keban*, or sowing basket

105. In studying sowing methods, I made a count of the number of grains in 192 different dibble-holes, taken at random, on more than a dozen different farms. This count showed an overall range of from 5 to 35 grains per hole, and a general mean of 11·7 grains per hole; the median was 11 and the mode 12. A detailed analysis of the sowing styles of 13 different members of Rumah Nyala, from unmarried girls to women of over 60 years, gave personal averages varying from 9 to 16 grains per hole. In Table 3, the sowing styles of six of these women are compared. Each average, etc. is based on a series of more than ten separate observations. All six women were well practised in the art of sowing, but it will

5: Roth E-4 (no date) 1892 OC6 Iban OC6

as the various houses are built according to a single scale and measurement and by a combination of labour, they rarely fail to present a uniform and regular appearance.[1]

There is always a ladder at either end of the terrace by which to ascend and sometimes one or more towards the centre of the *tanju* or open air-platform. The roof is thatched throughout with the same material—shingles or palm leaves—if the latter the *nipa* (*daun apong*) leaves are used where procurable, and where not (*dăunbira*) the *pandanus*. The flooring in some villages is made of palm trees split into laths (*nibong* = wild varieties of the *areca*); in other cases of cane or bamboo or even twigs. The laths of split bamboo allow a delicious current of air to permeate the apartment. The outer walls are of plank, the inner of bark. No nails are used, the beams or rafters are lashed together with rattans or secured by wooden pegs. The posts are innumerable and of hard wood. The village is surrounded at its base by a wooden palisade which is itself protected by *chevaux de frise* of pointed bamboo. The village is divided by a plank walling into two main portions, the front and the rear. The former partakes of the nature of a very wide verandah and is open throughout its entire length. The latter occupies the rear of the entire building and is sub-divided into apartments, one for each family. Between the plank wall and the edge of the *ruai* is the *tempuan* or footway, a narrow passage running through the centre so that a person may walk from one end of the village to the other without encountering any obstacles.

Every family thus possesses a compact little residence to themselves comprising a *bilich* or room where they can enjoy privacy when they like, a *tempuan* or thoroughfare where they pound their rice and pile up their firewood, a *ruai* or verandah where they receive visitors, a *tanju* or open-air platform where they air their things and lounge in the cool of the evening, and a *sadau* or loft where they keep their tools and store their paddy.

The *bilich* or private apartment is furnished with a swinging door which opens outwards and is closed by means of a heavy weight suspended to a thong to the inside. The door can be secured when required by means of a bar. If the room be unusually large, it may have two doors for the sake of convenience. Figures are sometimes carved or painted on the door—saurians among others, grotesque images of supernatural beings, and indecent caricatures of the human person. There is no window such as we understand, but a portion of the roof is so constructed that it can be raised a foot or two by means of a stick to let

[1] Kĭnah houses are packed close together and there are originally three in a row without any intermediate space. The floor is only four feet from the ground, and any one can jump in.